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### Tom Swift Jr.

By William R. Gowen



# DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 210 TALES OF BORDER ADVENTURE

Publisher: Dick & Fitzgerald, 18 Ann St., New York, N. Y. Issues: 24 (highest number seen advertised.) Dates: 1860's. Schedule of Issue: Not known. Size: 9½x6". Pages: 100. Price: 25c. Illustrations: Colored cover with yellow border. Contents: See list of titles elsewhere in this issue.

### Tom Swift Jr.

#### by William R. Gowen

In the first part of this study we examined the publication history of the famous Tom Swift series, produced by The Stratemeyer Syndicate and copyrighted by Grosset & Dunlap between 1910 and 1935, with reprints and the additional publication of two Better Little Books by Whitman in subsequent years.

Including the two Better Little Books, published in 1939 and 1941, the Tom Swift series includes 40 titles.

We now examine the reincarnation of the Tom Swift series as the Tom Swift, Jr., series, between 1954 and 1971, which includes reprints still in production as of this date.

#### Background and Introduction

Following the demise of the Tom Swift series sometime after the final hardcover copyright date of 1935, the series appeared in print for an undetermined period both in Grosset & Dunlap format and in various reprintings of the final 10 titles by the Whitman Publishing Company. These Whitman editions probably lasted into the 1940's.

In the early 1950's the Stratemeyer Syndicate decided the time was appropriate for a revival of the series. Sales of The Hardy Boys had held up quite well during the post-World War II years and it was logical to assume that a new generation of readers was ready to enjoy the adventures of the famous inventor-explorer from upstate Shopton, New York.

But the syndicate had a problem: Tom Swift had grown older through the years, even to the point of marrying his longtime girlfriend, Mary Nestor ("Tom Swift and his House on Wheels," 1929). In terms of the march of time, Tom was now a mature man, not the type of hero that appeals to young readers.

Thus was created Tom Swift, Jr., Tom and Mary's son, whose mind was, if anything, even more brilliant than that of his dad. After all, the new generation had many advances of science with which to deal whereas for Tom Sr. the big "deal" was in many cases some new type of flying machine or ground transportation.

The hint of the future was given in "Tom Swift and his Planet Stone" of 1935 and times of the past were bridged to the days of the present in the first volumes of the new series with Tom Sr. still actively involved in Swift Enterprises. In the first volume of the new series, "Tom Swift and his Flying Lab," the story is only a few paragraphs old when another "planet stone" visits from space, thus starting the Swift clan on a series of 33 new adventures.

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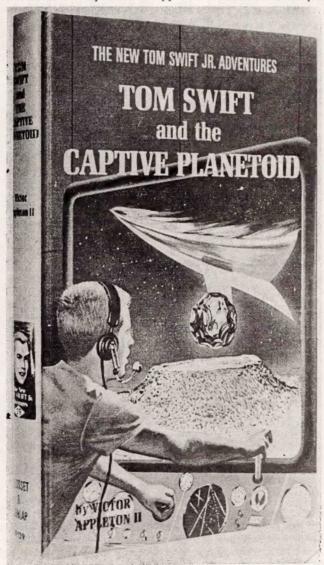
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#### Tom Swift Jr. - 1954-1971

The Tom Swift, Jr. series has undergone a publication history that is in many ways as fascinating as its predecessor. Two basic binding types were used in the Grosset & Dunlap hardcover editions and the series has twice been partially reprinted in paperback. Tom Swift, Jr. also has been published in Great Britain.

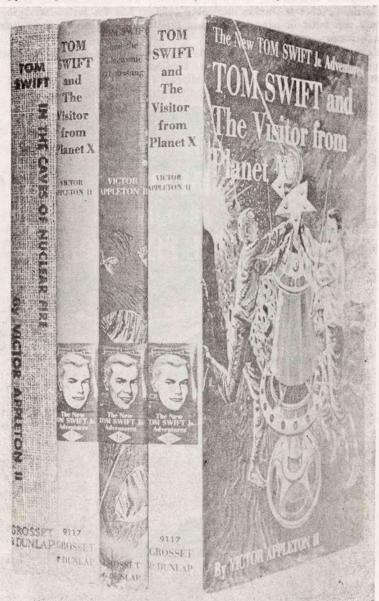
Before looking at each binding type individually, it is best to make several general comments concerning the binding formats.

The Grosset & Dunlap editions appeared in 1954 in a composition cover



Cover of "Tom Swift and the Captive Planetoid" (copyright 1967).

(cardboard with paper covering) with a full-color dust jacket. About half-way through the series run of 33 titles the binding format was changed to a vinyl-type composition cover with the previous dust jacket illustration now



The hardcover editions (1954-1971) had four binding variations (left to right): Blue paperboard (dust jacket not shown); illustrated vinyl with blue spine; illustrated vinyl with wraparound cover picture; illustrated vinyl with yellow-orange spine. The wraparound version had limited production. Author has observed only Vol. 18 appearing with wraparound picture.

impregnated directly into the cover itself. Dust jackets for all G & D series were dropped at this time, probably in 1961. The vinyl-type pictorial cover underwent a change in color during this time prior to the series' demise shortly after the final copyright date of 1971.

The paperback reincarnations, by Grosset & Dunlap's Tempo Books division, have appeared sporadically on the market between 1972 and the present.

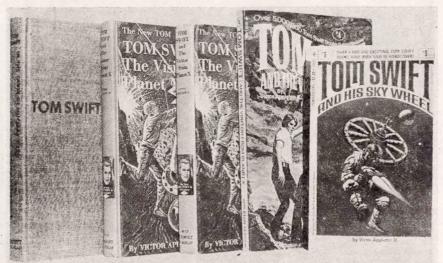
#### Variation I-Blue composition binding with Dust Jacket

When the series appeared in 1954 this was the type of binding used. The type of materials used were similar to all G & D series books of the period such as Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew and Rick Brant. While the number of pages in the early titles was similar in number to the older series books like Tom Swift Sr., the books were noticeably thinner because of (a) thinner grade of paper and (b) composition instead of cloth binding. Average thickness of the early Tom Swift Jr. titles was about ¾ of an inch as compared with 1½ inches in the later titles in the Tom Swift, Sr. series.

The number of titles appearing in Variation 1 (blue composition with dust jacket) was 17, from "Tom Swift and his Flying Lab" in 1954 through "Tom Swift and the Visitor from Planet X" in 1961.

The cover design was dark blue lettering printed over the medium blue composition cover. A head portrait of Tom Swift is superimposed over a blue print on the front cover with the name "Tom Swift Jr." to the left. The spine has the full title of the book plus the author, Victor Appleton II. "Tom Swift" and "Grosset & Dunlap" appear horizontally while "and his ——" and the author nameline appear vertically running from top to bottom.

Dust Jacket — The dust jacket is on white coated paper featuring a full-color painting encompassing both the front and spine. The spine has the title listed in white lettering horizontally at the top and a color head shot of Tom superimposed over a blue print in the center. The traditional Grosset & Dunlap



Progression of Tom Swift Jr. bindings (from left): Blue paperboard cover (using dust jacket); illustrated vinyl-type with blue spine; illustrated vinyl-type with yellow-orange spine; large-size paperback reprint of 1972; standard size paperback reprint of 1977.

colophon is at the bottom.

The back of the dust jacket features a list of other titles available, either of the Tom Swift Jr. series or The Hardy Boys. There is no printing on the reverse side of the jacket as in the Tom Swift Sr. series.

Endpapers — The endpaper design is a blue-and-white drawing of Tom, presumably at the window of his flying lab, probably drawn by series artistt Graham Kaye. There is also a frontispiece by Kaye, a black line drawing on plain paper, as well as several full or partial page line illustrations.

#### Variation 2-Pictorial vinyl binding, blue spine

This variation appeared in 1961 with the publication of "Tom Swift and his Electronic Hydrolung" and continued through that publication year only, including all previous 17 titles as reprinted in this format.

The illustrations printed directly onto the front cover are the exact duplicate of the dust jackets previously described. The spine is medium blue with the familiar head portrait of Tom superimposed over a blue print. This illustration, as it does on the previous dust jackets, contains the volume number in a small diamond under the logo "The New Tom Swift Jr. Adventures."

The cover back contains a listing of all the Tom Swift Jr. titles available



Paperback reprint (1977), right, of "Tom Swift and his Outpost in Space" has a new title, although the text remains the same as the original, published in 1955.

at that point and also has a vignette of two astronauts floating in a space-walk outside Tom's "Outpost in Space."

The one title, "Tom Swift and his Electronic Hydrolung," does not have a blue spine but instead shows the front cover illustration wrapped around the spine. This is the only title seen in wraparound format and was probably a transitional phase between the blue and yellow spine versions. Because the back cover of this title is blue it is included in the general category Variation 2.

Endpapers — With the change from composition bindings with dust jacket (Variation 2), the endpapers also changed. No longer a blue line drawing, they are a cruder black line drawing on uncoated paper, the same illustration of Tom gazing out the lab window but much simplified.

#### Variation 3-Pictorial vinyl binding, yellow spine

The most familiar variation of Tom Swift Jr. among collectors is the vinyl-type binding with yellow spine. This type appeared in 1962 with "Tom Swift and his Triphibian Atomicar" and continued through the publication of the 33rd and last title in 1971. As in previous reprintings of both this and the Tom Swift Sr. series, all prior titles were reprinted in this latest format.

The yellow spine variation is identical to the blue vinyl type in every respect except color. The color is closer to yellow-orange, or "school bus" yellow, although in older copies it can fade to a much lighter color.

The reason for Grosset & Dunlap's change from blue to yellow is open to speculation. The best guess is that G & D wanted to avoid confusion in bookstores and libraries with the Hardy Boys series which to this day is printed in a blue binding almost identical to the Tom Swift binding Variation 2. It was probably easy for a prospective buyer to buy a Hardy Boys title when he really intended to buy a Tom Swift title.

The endpapers remained the same as for Variation 2 but with the change in format from Variation 1 to Vars. 2 and 3, the artist was no longer Graham Kaye, both for cover fronts and interior illustrations. Charles Brey illustrated titles Nos. 18-21, Edward Moritz was the artist for Nos. 22-27, Ray Johnson was artist for Nos. 28-32 and Bill Dolwick for the final title, "Tom Swift and the Galaxy Ghosts," No. 33.

#### Reprints in Great Britain

Starting in 1969, under license agreement with Grosset & Dunlap, the firm of Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. of Glasgow reprinted 20 titles in the series. The Collins reprints were published until 1971, about the same time the series was discontinued in the United States. According to the deputy publishing manager of that firm, the last Collins titles went out of stock in 1973.

The format was identical to Variation 3—vinyl-type composition covers with yellow spine. The size is very slightly smaller probably because of the British use of metric binding machinery.

These were the titles reprinted by Collins:

In May 1969 the firm published "Giant Robot," "Outpost in Space," "3-D Telejector," "Race to the Moon," "Aquatomic Tracker," and "Captive Planetoid."

On September 1969 were published "Cosmic Astronauts," "Visitor from Planet X," "Asteroid Pirates," "Sonic Boom Trap," "Subocean Geotron," and "Mystery Comet."

In May 1970 were published "Dyna-4 Capsule," "Triphibian Atomicar," "Megascope Space Prober," "Repelatron Skyway," "Polar-Ray Dynasphere" and "G-Force Inverter."

In June 1971 were published "Cosmotron Express" and "Phantom Satellite."

It can be seen that there was no real pattern to the titles published. Collins probably printed those it thought would "sell" to the British youth market. They were published only in the yellow-spine format, according to the deputy publishing manager.

Collins Ltd. also advises that it continues to publish the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series under the same licensing agreement with G & D, with the Hardy Boys the only other boys' series other than Tom Swift printed in this agreement.

#### Paperback Reprintings-Type 1 and 2

In 1972 Grosset & Dunlap's Tempo Books division reprinted four Tom Swift Jr. titles in this oversized paperback format. Size of the books was 5¼" by 8½" and they were printed from the same plate as the original hard-cover titles with Graham Kaye's illustrations intact. The cover illustration was modernized, in particular noting the length of Tom's hair, which is now contemporary length rather than crew-cut.

The four titles appearing in this format were:

"Tom Swift and his Electronic Retroscope," appearing with the new title, "Tom Swift in the Jungle of the Mayas."

"Tom Swift and his Spectromarine Selector," appearing with the new title, "Tom Swift and the City of Gold."

"Tom Swift and the Cosmic Astronauts," title unchanged.

"Tom Swift and the Visitor from Planet X," title unchanged.

In 1977 Grosset & Dunlap and Tempo tried it again, reprinting six other titles in paperback, this time in standard paperback size of 4¼" by 6%". These books were also printed from the original plates but the smaller format allowed for less "white space" margins around the printed text.

Graham Kaye is no longer the artist, having been replaced by Tony Tallarico. On those original plates where Kay's line drawings appeared they have been simply replaced by Tallarico's updated versions with the remainder of the page (type and page number) remaining identical to the hardcover versions.

The six titles appearing in the second paperback format were:

"Tom Swift and his Flying Lab," title unchanged.

"Tom Swift and his Jetmarine," title unchanged.

"Tom Swift and his Rocket Ship," title unchanged.
"Tom Swift and his Giant Robot," title unchanged.

"Tom Swift and his Outpost in Space," title changed to "Tom Swift and his Sky Wheel."

"Tom Swift in the Caves of Nuclear Fire," title unchanged.

Grosset & Dunlap has informed this writer that it has "no present plans" for reissuing any additional titles in paperback, but that the company planned to reissue the same six titles (above) in March 1979. If this is the case they should presently be available at book or toy stores.

So, from 1910 to March of 1979, Tom Swift and his son Tom Jr. have thrilled millions of readers in more than a dozen publication formats and reincarnations. Through the 73 adventures of the father-son inventing team all of us have been entertained again and again.

Is there a Tom Swift III in the future? Stay tuned.

The author wishes to thank the following for their assistance in the research of this series:

John T. Dizer, Jr.; Julius R. Chenu; Joseph M. Wolfson of Grosset &

Dunlap; and W. Allan of William Collins Sons Co., of Glasgow and London. The completeness and accuracy of this study would have been impossible without their assistance.

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## Harrie Irving Hancock's Boy Series Books

By Bob Chenu

Harrie Irving Hancock was a prolific juvenile writer who is best known for his "Dick & Co." saga, in which is depicted the fortunes of a group of six boys from the city of "Gridley." In these stories the boys progress from grammar school through high school, and then onward in pairs to Annapolis, West Point, and civil engineering careers. Their fortunes are later continued into later adventures after completion of their educational development. Altemus was the publisher of these tales.

One has to wonder and guess at where the city of "Gridley" is located. The books tell us only by inference. We are told that Gridley is an "average city of some 30,000 inhabitants," but we aren't told what state it is located in. Since the boys have winter adventures, it is evidently to be found somewhere in the northern part of the country. In one of the books Dick Prescott travels to West Point, taking a train and arriving in New York City the same day. This would narrow the possible location to the northeast. It would seem to me that the railroad used might be the New York Central, the Pennsylvania R R, or the New Haven line (N Y, N H & H). My own guess would tend towards Pennsylvania or Ohio, but other areas are possible.

In any event Gridley furnishes us with the six sterling young heroes around whose adventures the saga is built. They are Dick Prescott, Greg Holmes, Dave Darrin, Dan Dalzell, Tom Reade, and Harry Hazleton. We follow all six through four volumes each of the Grammar School Boys, the High School Boys, and the High School Boys Vacation Series!

After completing High School, the boys are split up. Prescott and Holmes go to the Military Academy at West Point. Darrin and Dalzell go to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. Reade and Hazleton go west to become civil engineers on various large construction jobs.

Each of the military academy series' is comprised of four volumes, while the Young Engineers series is made up of five volumes.

The careers of Darrin and Dalzell are then continued in the naval service as officers after graduation and commissioning. There are six more volumes of this series, carrying them through World War I.

Prescott and Holmes appear in more or less minor roles as officers in the Boys Of The Army series in eight volumes.

There is also the Conquest of the United States series, made up of four volumes (quite scarce too) in which the boys appear. This recounts the invasion and conquest of the United States by the Germans. Appearing in 1916, it was in the nature of propaganda showing the fate of an unprepared nation, and the need to build up our armed forces.

The idea of bringing the young heroes from grammar school, at age thirteen, through progression to young adulthood is a fairly unique ploy by Hancock. Most young series heroes go on eternally the same age. The Hardy Boys haven't progressed from their youth in 57 books over a period of 51 years, from 1927 to 1978. Tom Swift didn't seem to age, either. This was more typical, even in series which ran a long while.

Hancock also wrote some other juvenile series books which are not a part of the saga. These include a two volume series called the Square Dollar Boys, and the seven volume Motor Boat Club series. The former is also quite hard to find and thus reflects the fact that it was not a good seller.

Hancock also wrote other non-series books earlier in his career, which are all very hard to find. Aguinaldo's Hostage, published in 1900 by Lee & Shep-

ard; "Chuggins," published in 1904 by Altemus (and looking nothing at all like the Altemus series books you are familiar with); and "Bountyville Boys,"

published in 1907 by Appleton. These three are all juvenile fiction.

He also wrote "What One Man Saw," copyrighted in 1898 and 1900 by Street & Smith. This is an account of Hancock's experiences in the Spanish American War as a newspaper correspondent. "Life At West Point," published in 1902 by Putnam is a historical and factual account of the West Point military academy.

There are also some other titles which I am aware of but which I do not have and therefore cannot speak of with any certainty. I believe them to be paperbacks, but am not certain. One title is "Blackmail" published by Street at 10c; the price here makes paperback practically certain. Then there are two more published by Ogilvie at 25c each, titled "Detective Johnson of New Orleans," and "Inspector Henderson." At 25c in pre WW I days these could have been cheap hard covers. They would not appear to have been juveniles, to judge by their titles. Perhaps they were something on the order of the Nick Carters. I only speculate.

Mr. Hancock, prior to writing the boys series books, was a prolific writer of serials for Norman Munro's Golden Hours. These stories were later reprinted in dime novel format in Street & Smith's Brave and Bold Weekly and Bound to Win Library. He also wrote the Frank Manley stories for Frank Tousey under the pseudonym "Physical Director."

A listing of Hancock's series books follows. All were published by Al-

temus.

#### GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOYS SERIES

The Grammar School Boys of Gridley; or, Dick and Co. Start Things Moving. 1911.

The Grammar School Boys Snowbound; or, Dick and Co. at Winter Sports. 1911 The Grammar School Boys in the Woods; or, Dick and Co. Trail Fun and Knowledge, 1911.

The Grammar School Boys in Summer Athletics; or, Dick and Co. Make Their Fame Secure. 1911.

#### HIGH SCHOOL BOYS SERIES

The High School Freshmen; or, Dick and Co.,'s First Year Pranks and Sports. 1910.

The High School Pitcher; or, Dick and Co. on the Gridley Diamond. 1910.

The High School Left End; or, Dick and Co. on the Football Gridiron. 1910.

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## RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS, BOYS BOOKS, ETC.

HORATIO ALGER: FROM RAGS TO RICHES TO "MOST INFLUENTIAL" AUTHOR, by Bob Lundegaard. Minneapolis Tribune, Sunday, July 15, 1979. A well illustrated short article about Alger on the occasion of Ralph Gardner's visit to the University of Minnesota Hess Collection where he is researching a history of Street & Smith. (Sent in by Randy Cox.)

#### A DIME NOVEL COLLECTOR'S BOOK SHELF

ALGER. A Biography Without a Hero, by Herbert R. Mayes. Gilbert K. Westgard II Publisher, 9561 N. Dee Road, Des Plaines, Ill. 60016, 1978. Introduction by Herbert R. Mayes giving the full details of the first publication of this "hoax" book with an afterword by Jack Bales. This publication should for all time silence the article writers who have used Mayes first publication as the source for their biased tomes about Alger. The book should be on the shelf next to the original edition.

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